DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 368 411 JC 940 216

AUTHOR Mott, Maxine C.
TITLE The Hunt for Hidden Resources: A Chair's Guide to Finding Campus Support for Faculty and Staff Development.
PUB DATE Feb 94
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the International Conference for Community College Chairs, Deans, and Other Instructional Leaders (3rd, Phoenix, AZ, February 23-26, 1994).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Role; College Planning; Community Colleges; Department Heads; Educational Finance; Educational Resources; *Faculty Development; *Financial Exigency; Financial Needs; Program Development; Resource Allocation; *Staff Development; *Strategic Planning; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

In times of budget constraints and cutbacks, it is especially important to promote staff and faculty development activities since they may not be viewed as college priorities and employee morale and motivation can suffer during such times. Department chairs must engage in a "treasure hunt" to search for hidden resources to meet professional development needs. Before the hunt can begin, professional development goals for the department need to be identified, based on the department's overall objectives collaboratively determined by faculty and staff. Faculty and staff should then identify individualized professional goals and objectives which reflect the departmental goals. Then, an action plan can be developed, identifying how and where hidden treasures might be unearthed; responsibilities can be assumed by groups or individuals; a timeline should be determined; and a progress report expected. To start the actual search for resources, three directions should be explored. First, chairs should seek out hidden talents of departmental staff and ask students for their ideas. Second, other departments, such as teaching resource centers, professional development coordinators and professional development committees, should be searched. Finally, a look into the local community can provide inexpensive but valuable resources. Throughout the process, the chair should provide department members with encouragement, support, and a sense of purpose. (KP)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 368 411

The Hunt for Hidden Resources

A Chair's Guide to Finding Campus Support for Faculty and Staff Development

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. C. Mott

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Maxine C. Mott

Faculty Development Coordinator
Academic Development Centre
Mount Royal College
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T3E 6K6

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

JC 940 216

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Changes in an organizational economy often have major impacts on resources available to academic departments for professional development programs. Frequently staff and faculty development is not viewed as a priority by the managers of budgets, but rather as a fringe benefit or perk; something to be used as "a reward to employees when times are good". Dwindling resource allocation for professional development results in a decline in the desired and required activities which will ensure employee competence. This decline tends to occur at the same time department chairs are told to do more, do it better and do it with less money. In an attempt to meet these challenges the chair must ensure that staff and faculty remain current, efficient and effective in their various roles. Budgetary cutbacks also tend to have a negative effect on employee morale and motivation. Staff and faculty development, therefore, becomes even more critical in times of budget constraints and cutbacks.

With decreased financial support Chairs will need to engage in a search process to find hidden resources which will assist in meeting the professional development needs of the department. There are diverse approaches available to you as you set out on your hunt for these resources. My discussion will focus on two quite different strategies that can be used when someone is involved in a search or hunt.

The first strategy is based on the scavenger hunt approach. The word scavenger means someone who searches through discarded objects for something of value or to pick up what is left behind by others. The objectives of most scavenger hunts are to search for and collect items of little value or worth and to provide entertainment for a group of people. The process that occurs is typically disorganized; teams bolting off in several different directions attempting to gather an assortment of items, for what purpose they are not certain. Once all the listed objects have been collected the teams return to home base, proudly and happily displaying their accumulation of abandoned and worthless goods. Participants then wait for the prize (reward, benefit,

something of value) to be handed out. In this situation, the chances of being declared a winner are usually slim. And once the actual scavenger hunt is over, there is little residual value or worth attached to the objects which have been collected.

A more effective and productive approach to your hunt for hidden resources would be to engage in a treasure hunt. The word treasure suggests something of value and worth, something which is cherished, viewed as a prize and held in esteem. A treasure hunt implies that you will be seeking something that will enrich your department and will bring with it continuing benefits and rewards. Unlike a scavenger hunt, which brings short-term gains, a treasure hunt suggests there will be long term profits.

The value of what you are seeking in a treasure hunt differs from those items sought in a scavenger hunt, as does the planning process you will be involved in prior to setting out on your search. In a scavenger hunt you are handed a list of peculiar items, and sent off in search of them. In a treasure hunt it is necessary to first determine what resources you are looking for and what purpose they will serve. Before the hunt can take place the department must review and assess what it is they value. The department needs to have a clear vision of its' goals and objectives and should answer the following questions: What is the treasure expected to do? How will it do this? Are these realistic goals and expectations? How will the department be different once the treasure has been found? To answer these questions it is most constructive and efficient if a special meeting is scheduled. The meeting should be set so there are no other items on the agenda and at a time when all department members can attend.

Identification of **professional development goals for the department**, based on the department's overall objectives, is the desired outcome of this planning

meeting. While engaged in the setting of professional development goals the department can ask questions such as: What are the current development needs of faculty and staff? What changes will be mandated that we have no control over? What will be our needs in relation to any imposed changes? What are or will be the needs of the students in the programs we offer? Some of the issues or needs that might generated from these questions could be curricula revisions (writing across your curriculum), a department based approach to a new teaching and learning strategy (cooperative/active learning) or the introduction of new technology (a communication system) into the department. It is important that the goals be realistic and is usually helpful if they are prioritized. Each goal the department establishes involving innovation and change will presumably require some form of profession development. Thus, these innovations and changes will become the basis for your search.

Departmental goal setting, done in a collaborative and cooperative manner, is the fundamental first step in the treasure hunt. To be successful in this initial stage of the search requires department members who are committed to the process. The Chair can encourage this by including and involving faculty and staff in the decision making. Unless individuals feel that they have had a part in the planning and agree with the goal or treasure sought, the search will mostly likely be a waste of time, energy and scarce resources.

Once the goals and objectives of the department have been agreed upon, the next step is for faculty and staff to identify **individualized professional development goals and objectives.** Individual plans should also reflect the department objectives in some manner. Chairs can support this stage of the search by sharing their personal and professional development plans with department members. Ownership and accountability are the essence of a successful treasure hunt. For this to occur people need to be able to see the relevance of the search related to their own needs. Most individuals need to

agree with the **value or worth of the treasure** before they will make a personal commitment to taking an active role in a treasure hunt.

With departmental and individual development goals defined subsequent steps involve drawing a map to outline potential search routes available and appropriate to pursue and drafting a detailed search itinerary. The map becomes your action plan and provides a focus for **how and where** the hidden treasures or resources might be unearthed. When preparing the itinerary it is advisable to have alternate routes identified in the event that one or more routes lead to a deadend. The itinerary or timeline should allow for unplanned side trips and sightseeing that many hunters engage in.
Team work continues to be an vital factor during this stage of the hunt. Department members will need to decide and agree on a description of what the treasure might look. This is important since one person's treasure may be considered debris by someone else. If people don't know what they are looking for it is possible they will not recognize a hidden treasure or resource when they see it.

Precise tasks to be undertaken during the actual treasure hunt should be decided through consultation with all interested and eager department members. Particular responsibilities can be assumed by teams or individuals assignments, whichever works best for your group. Distinct timelines of the various activities to be undertaken need to be determined before the hunt starts. Deadlines encourage people to take action and provide strategic focal points for reviewing and regrouping. Participants in the hunt will also need to know when a progress report on their specific activities is expected. How do you start the actual search once the treasure has been clearly defined and goals outlined with action plans (individual and departmental) established? There are three primary directions that a department should explore. The first path available for investigation is inside your department. Look closely at the

members of your department and you may discover some hidden treasures buried under the workload of "everyday routines". Seek out the talents of faculty and staff, talents beyond the "working skills" required for their assigned and described jobs. You may uncover knowledge and competencies that can be invaluable in your search for resources. Students are commonly overlooked by departments as actual or potential resources. They can clarify what their real and potential needs are and may be able to help define what the treasure might look like. Postsecondary students have an assortment of talents that we never see displayed in the classroom; seek their input and ideas on where hidden resources can be found. Amongst the faculty, staff and students within the department you may discover a **rare** treasure.

The second avenue that invites exploring leads to other departments within your institution. Be curious and bold; don't limit your investigation to only academic departments. Travel into those less visible areas, into the countless service departments. The number of actual or potential resources can be immense in an educational environment. Specific areas to seek out are the Teaching Resource Centre, Professional Development Coordinator and Professional Development Committee if these are a part of your college. Most institutions have some arrangement for professional development support available to employees. It is irrelevant how that support is classified, since the services provided serve the same purpose, promoting faculty and staff development. Use this resource as a means for finding out who, what and where other resources might be located. If the specific treasure you are seeking cannot be found inside the college, people from other departments can serve as information or referral sources. You may wish to invite another department to join in the search they are seeking a similar treasure.

The third route that should be explored is outside the institution, looking at the community at large. Local communities offer numerous secondary routes that

often steer a search in the direction of inexpensive but valuable resources. Talk to and utilize your program advisory committees members. If you don't have an advisory committee, investigate the appropriateness of establishing one. Do you know what your alumni are doing? They may be able to provide such resources as space, expertise, materials or other goods and services that normally draw on your limited budget. Take advantage of any opportunities the community offers that are appropriate to the department's goal and objectives.

Two approaches that can be taken in the hunt for hidden resources have been outlined. The scavenger hunt strategy requires minimal departmental and individual exertion, time and planning. It usually offers immediate gratification for a limited investment. Unfortunately, a scavenger hunt generates little in the way of durable benefits or rewards to a department. If, however, you and the department are prepared to commit time and energy to the search process, a treasure hunt can result in valuable rewards. Clarification and consensus at the "treasure defining" stage, with realism and enthusiasm at the goal setting or "map drawing" stage can lead to those sought after treasures. The treasure hunt approach to searching for hidden resources offers benefits that bring continuing riches to the department. The chances of "winning" are much greater than those of a scavenger hunt.

The search for hidden resources is limited only by the lack of focus and imagination within a department. Throughout the search process a Chair needs to provide department members with encouragement, support and a sense of purpose for the hunt. By modelling openness and flexibility during times of change and challenge the Chair will facilitate the unearthing of hidden and perhaps even rare treasures.

We have lost the idea of how rich and infinite
our capacities really are!

R. G. Greenway